

## Interview with 2006 BPSA Tour Champion

### **Congratulations on winning the BPSA Tour Easkey. Were you confident of winning it?**

Thanks, I'm so stoked! It was my first year on tour and I was hoping for a good finish. After my win at the Welsh Open I was really fired up to win it but I knew it was going to be really tough. Especially because I left myself no time to prepare for the last event in Newquay. I came straight into it after 3 days of travelling back from Samoa and I broke my fav comp board on the plane!

### **Who was your stiffest competition do you think?**

Well the Irish girls have all been dominating the tour this year and my biggest competition was definitely Nicole. She was still leading the tour before the final event in Newquay.

### **How was the surf for the last event and what was the tour like in general?**

Unfortunately the surf was pretty bad. A cold, windy mess but at least there was some size... The best surf we got was definitely at Freshwater in Wales the other events were pretty small and challenging!

### **Did you enjoy the Awards ceremony on Sunday night? Have you recovered yet?**

Oh boy, those awards... ha-ha! It was a great night. Once Nicole started us all on those shots of god knows what with glittery gold bits that Sharpy thought tasted like Christmas cake it was set to be a crazy night. Everyone rocked the dance floor at Sailors!

### **Why do you think that the Irish girls are so successful on the tour?**

Maybe it's because we all grew up surfing with each other and that's pushed our surfing. It's funny though 'cause we mostly surf reefs and prefer the bigger, gnarlier stuff and the comps are usually a sloppy mess...I guess we put a lot into it, travelling over to England, struggling with the sterling robbery and we know we have to win to have any hope of covering the cost!

### **What are you up to at the moment?**

I'm back trying to catch up with my studies at uni, juggling my surfing and studies. The University of Ulster have just awarded me a sports scholarship so it really helps having their support.

### **How did your trip to Africa go? What was your most enduring memory of the experience?**

Wow, Africa was incredible – an emotional rollercoaster ride! I travelled through Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda with my board strapped to the roof of the truck! I saw the great wildebeest migration, trekked next to some of the last mountain gorillas in the Virunga Volcanoes, white water rafting the Nile, working at children's orphanages. I eventually got to surf when I went to Mombasa. I travelled along the east coast of Kenya and found a few cool spots. No one to surf with except big mambas (crocs) and sharks! I volunteered at a centre for AIDS orphans. I brought over body boards and took the kids to the beach. They loved the water. There is so much talent, hope and creativity but such little opportunity it's heartbreaking... Impossible to pick a single memory, each day felt like a lifetime worth of experiences. I really had to let go of a lot of my western ways of thinking and being and adapt every day to all the incredible highs and lows... I miss hearing 'pole pole mzungu', (slowly, slowly white girl in Swahili)

**Do you have any plans for travelling this winter?**

Well I may be escaping the winter blues for a few big ones and to watch the final event of the women's CT in Hawaii before Christmas! I'll be back in time for my exams, promise!

**What top tip do you have for keeping warm this winter?**

Two winter wetsuits are essential, nothing worse than getting into an icy cold wet wetsuit! Drink hot lemon and ginger before and after a surf or else find a nice, cosy cave with an open fire and snuggle up next to a big bear...